

Majlis of Mufti Radhaul Haq Sahib Db

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Darul Uloom Zakariyya

Karguzari of trip to Uzbekistan & Russia

Before Ramadan, we had the great fortune of traveling to Uzbekistan and Russia. Prior to recent times, all outward semblance of deen was banned in Uzbekistan. Qur'ans were locked behind glass, making touching and reading almost impossible.

This was not always the case though. Uzbekistan boasts of a great Islamic history. Once upon a time, Uzbekistan was a center of knowledge and people would flock from all over to word to Uzbekistan to seek knowledge. Ulama were so common that it was almost as if you could find an 'alim beneath every rock. It was home to great ulama who were authorities in every field of Islamic science, despite their native tongue not even being Arabic.

Zamakhshari (who was a Mu'tazili) wrote Tafsir Kashaf, which the Arabs consider as a primary text and source. Zamakhshar is a city in Uzbekistan, Zimakh means مرمّت (to repair or fix), i.e. the city wherein things are repaired or fixed.

Samarqand:

In Samarqand there is a graveyard wherein were buried only those Ulama whose name was 'Muhammad'. Ali bin Abi Bakr bin Abdul Jalil bin Khalil (رحمة الله عليه), the author of *Hidayah*, was not buried in that graveyard because his name was not Muhammad. However, Abu Mansur Maturidi (رحمة الله عليه), whose name is 'Muhammad', is buried in that graveyard. Unfortunately, when Soviets took over Samarqand, they destroyed the graveyard and flattened all the headstones in it. After Uzbekistan gained independence, they reconverted it into a graveyard. However, no one knew where the graves were.

There was a masjid nearby whose foundations and walls were saved. In an effort to reconstruct the graveyard, people researched and found in certain books that from such-and-such wall of the nearby masjid, so many meters away is the grave of Abu Mansur Maturidi (رحمة الله عليه). On this basis they measured and marked a grave. In his scholarly lineage in the sciences of 'Aqidah and 'Ilm al-Kalam, Abu Mansur Maturidi (رحمة الله عليه) traces himself back, from three different angles, to Imam Abu Hanifah (رحمة الله عليه) through his teachers. While the science of 'Aqidah comprises our fundamental beliefs, the science of 'Ilm al-Kalam is the rational defense of those beliefs.

Abu'l Hasan al-Ash'ari (رحمة الله عليه), from the Ashar tribe in Yemen, was a contemporary of Abu Mansur Maturidi (رحمة الله عليه). Both these scholars were masters in the field of 'Aqidah and 'Ilm al-Kalam. They differ slightly in a few rulings,

but these differences are minor.

Also, in Samarqand is the grave of Quth'am bin 'Abbas (رضي الله عنه), the brother of 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas (رضي الله عنه). He was a governor in that region for about twenty years during the *khilafa* of Mu'awiya (رضي الله عنه). He went there for Jihad, was martyred and is buried on a mountaintop.

There is a place called the Green City where Taimur Lang was born. He began his conquests in Samarqand. His scheme was such that he only fought the Muslims and never bothered to turn his attention to the non-Muslim lands of Europe. He harboured extreme enmity towards Mu'awiya (رضي الله عنه). Additionally, it is possible that he was inclined towards Shia'ism. During the time of the *Sahabah*, the sahabah first conquered hearts and thereafter conquered lands, ie they would first make them sincere Muslims, which is why those lands were filled with Islam and Muslims.

In Tashkent, is the grave of Qaffal Shashi (رحمة الله عليه), a shafi scholar and a great sufi. *كن* in their language means 'a place to stay' and *تاش* means 'beloved', i.e. 'The place where beloved people stay'. It is possible that due to *شاش* meaning urine in Farsi (which they speak fluently), the city was renamed Tash from Shaash. It is also possible that Shaash refers to the name of an area in China originally known as Kashwar, a muslim-majority area.

The authors of the famous books 'Usool Shashi' and 'Munyatul Musalli' are from Shash. Many people say its authors are from Tashkent, but in my opinion, they are from Shash that is in China in Kashwar. This is because those scholars from Uzbekistan and its surrounds generally have big titles next to their name such as *Fakhr al-Islam*, *Shams al-A'immah*. They add titles to their names and preserve their names that way. However, the authors of Usool Shashi and Munyat al-Musalli remain unknown. We can see from this that they likely resided in Shash in China. Otherwise, their names would have been well known. In Tashkent there are not a lot of historical sites. In Samarqand however, there is the graveyard of 'Muhammad' and Taimur Lang's relatives. Lang means crippled (due to being hit by an arrow). The word Taimur is originally from Tumoor or Tamar (date).

Bukhara:

It is possible that Bukhara was named due to the mist and fog that rises from water. In the mornings we witness the mist and fog that rise in wet areas, this is called Bukhar.

It is the birth place of Imam Bukhari (رحمة الله عليه). There is a very large masjid there where Imam Bukhari (رحمة الله عليه) used to conduct lessons. The masjid, which still stands today, can accommodate thousands of people. It is also the same masjid that Genghis Khan, the Mongol conqueror, attacked on the day of Jumu'ah, killing 1400 musallis and casting their bodies into a nearby well. A small Minaret was built here which has 8 doors. This signifies the 8 doors of Jannah being open to the martyrs buried there.

Imam Bukhari (رحمة الله عليه) passed away about 30 km from Samarqand, in a place called Khartang. Khartang is a Persian word which has 3 possible meanings,

- 1) So many people attended his Janazah that renting a donkey (Khar) became expensive (Tang). Nowadays too, there are a lot of donkeys visible in the area.
- 2) Khar means donkey and Tang meaning few, i.e. so many people went for the Janaazah that there was a shortage of donkeys.
- 3) Tang is a belt that is tied onto a donkey and due to the large numbers of people, they all had it.

When Imam Bukhari (رحمة الله عليه) reached Khartang, some of the people of Samarqand invited Imam Bukhari to their town. Other residents however said that Imam Bukhari is not welcome in their town. Alas, great people have both admirers and critics! In the end they finally agreed to allow him to come, but he made the du'aa "Oh Allah! they do not want me and I do not want them. So, give me death that I may leave this world."

The scholars say that one should not be desirous of death but rather say:

اللهم أحييني إذا كانت الحياة خيراً لي وتوفني إذا كانت الوفاة خيراً لي

Oh Allah, keep me alive if life is beneficial for me, and grant me death if death is beneficial to me

It is impossible to add a price tag to life, as it is such a valuable thing. That is why the scholars say, if a person has the desire of the hereafter to go and meet his beloveds, like the e.g. of Bilal and Huzaifa (رضي الله عنهما) who at their death said:

غداً تلقى الأَحبَّاءَ مُحَمَّدًا وَحَزْبَهُ

Tomorrow we shall meet our beloveds, Muhammad Sallallahu Allahi Wasallam & his companions

In the Battle of Siffin, Ali (رضي الله عنه) proceeded forth without armour. People asked him the reason for this. He said: "I have no concern, either I will mount death or death will mount me".

Another reason a person may be desirous of death is that if he remains alive, he may fall into tribulation, or people will fall into sin due to him. Like Maryam (رضي الله عنها) said in Surah Maryam, Verse 23:

يَا لَيْتَنِي مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا مَّنْسِيًّا

If only I had died prior to this and had been long forgotten

Similarly, Yusuf (عليه السلام) went through many circumstances: first he was cast into a well, later unjustly thrown into jail. After that though he was seated on the throne, and served his father, brothers, and the whole nation. In the end he said:

تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ

Give me death on Islam and join me with the pious

Imam Bukhari (رحمة الله عليه) eventually passed away here. From his grave, a fragrance emanated. They placed a covering over his grave so that people do not take the soil. This was due to Imam Bukhari's knowledge and righteous deeds. Imam Bukhari (رحمة الله عليه) has said that since he came to know that backbiting is haram, he never backbit anyone. For us, backbiting is as common as eating and drinking!

Imam Bukhari (رحمة الله عليه) once while travelling by boat, began counting his dirhams. Someone observed him and began shouting that his dirhams were lost and totalled the amount that Imam Bukhari had. The crew said we will search everyone, when they came to Imam Bukhari, they didn't find anything. The person approached Imam Bukhari privately and asked him where the money was as he had observed it and counted it. Imam Bukhari replied, "I threw it into the sea". Had they found the coins with him, they would have accused him even though it belonged to him. This would taint his reputation, which took a lifetime to build. Thus he preferred to just get rid of it.

In general, Imam Bukhari did not have any love for wealth. He would get about 500 dirhams from rent, which he would spend in the path of Allah ta'ala, even though at certain times he would not come out for Salaah due to not having sufficient clothing.

Uzbekistan once upon a time had no shortage of 'ulama, muhadditheen and scholars of every field. The likes of Ibn Sina also came from this area. But later the Russians came and changed the mindset of the people, severing their link with the 'ulama. 'Ulama need to have a link with the people either through tabligh or khanqahs. This is extremely important. One muhaddith, when asked what he desired, replied by saying: {baytun khal – an empty house}. This is fine for some Ulama. However, if all the 'ulama do this, then the work will be destroyed. Alhamdulillah, in this country, people are enthusiastic to connect to the Ulama. Therefore, Insha-Allah, they won't go astray.

May Allah ta'ala save us all from misguidance and keep us connected to the 'ulama. Amin.